

# King County Parks **Your** **Big Backyard**



King County

King County  
Parks and Recreation Division



**2008**  
**Third Quarter Report**  
Parks Omnibus Ordinance Report  
to the King County Council  
January – September 2008

we're at work so you can play

### Highlights of the Third Quarter

- ❖ Overall, third quarter 2008 business revenues were up slightly compared to the same period in 2007. Major special events, such as the Cirque du Soleil and the Concerts at Marymoor, have contributed to this trend, generating significant revenue for the Division.
- ❖ Marymoor Park revenue is up compared to 2007, in large part due to a significant increase in revenue from the Concerts at Marymoor series. The shows brought in \$470,000, more than double the revenue from 2007. This can be attributed to the increased number of concerts from 12 in 2007 to 21 in 2008, as well as to the collection of a \$5.00 per car parking fee, new in 2008.
- ❖ Revenues from the Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatics Center are up more than 5 percent compared to the same period in 2007. This can be attributed to greater revenue from team rentals, where a 5 percent fee increase was implemented, as well as from public recreation programs, which experienced higher attendance.
- ❖ Revenues from ball fields increased 50 percent from the third quarter of 2007 to 2008. An increase in youth athletic field fees, the completion of the synthetic turf conversions at Preston Athletic Fields and Community Park and Steve Cox Memorial Park, and the addition of several new user groups are the main reasons for the growth of ball field revenues.
- ❖ The Division launched a new partnership with Whole Foods Market called “5% for Parks Day” during the summer of 2008. Two area stores participated in the July day and two for the August day, with each store contributing 5 percent of its daily sales to King County Parks. The total donation came to \$20,070 (to be reported in the Fourth Quarter Report).

## Contents

Introduction .....	4 - 7
Revenues - Implementing the Business Plan .....	8 - 14
Implementing Entrepreneurial Strategies .....	15 - 18
Agreements with Other Organizations .....	19
Transferring Assets .....	20 - 21
Community Outreach and Involvement .....	22 - 25
Financial Plan – Third Quarter 2008 .....	Appendix A

## Parks and Recreation Division 2008 Third Quarter Report

### Introduction

The Omnibus Parks Ordinance (Ordinance 14509), adopted November 18, 2002, by the King County Council, included this reporting requirement for the Parks and Recreation Division:

“The division shall provide a written report to the council, filed with the clerk of the council, at least four times each year, by March 15, June 15, September 15, and December 15, and more frequently as directed by the council by motion, regarding the execution of the division’s duties and responsibilities as established in K.C.C. 2.16.045.E. Following transmittal of each written report, the division shall also make an oral presentation to the council. The written reports and oral presentations shall include, but shall not be limited to, information as to the division’s efforts in:

- A. Meeting revenue targets under section 7 of this ordinance;*
- B. Implementing entrepreneurial strategies including advertising, leasing and concession agreements;*
- C. Pursuing gifts, bequests and donations, including the value and sources of gifts, bequests and donations received;*
- D. Developing agreements with other organizations to provide recreation services;*
- E. Transferring parks and recreation assets within incorporated areas or potential annexation areas to cities; and*
- F. Community outreach and involvement.”*

This is our sixth year reporting on the accomplishments of the Division. Quarterly reports were transmitted for each quarter in 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007. The year 2008 marks the first year of the renewed Parks Levy fund, which was approved by voters in August 2007, with collections running from January 1, 2008 through December 31, 2013.

We have structured the quarterly report to correspond to the ordinance requirements. We welcome your ideas and input. Please do not hesitate to contact Kevin Brown or Tom Koney of the King County Parks and Recreation Division at 206-296-8687 if you have any questions or suggestions.

## Revenues - Summary

### Parks and Recreation Division Revenues

2008 Adopted Revenues	\$26,540,518
2008 Revised Revenues	\$27,307,893
2008 Estimated Revenues <sup>1</sup>	\$27,307,893
2007 Actual Revenues	\$22,836,388

### Third Quarter - Business Revenues Only

Levy funds, interest earnings, interfund transfers and similar revenues that are not within the control of the Division are excluded from this total.

**Actual Business Revenues<sup>2</sup>** (includes user fees and enterprise and entrepreneurial revenues)

January 1 – September 30, 2008	\$4,331,928
January 1 – September 30, 2007	\$4,263,645

Third quarter business revenues in 2008 were up slightly compared to the same period in 2007. Major special events, such as the Cirque du Soleil and the Concerts at Marymoor series, have been some of the highlights this year that have generated significant revenue for the Division. Even with a reduced asset base (due to the transfer of facilities), business revenues still comprise about 20 percent of the entire Division's revenue budget (2008), which is similar to the percentage in 2002 at the beginning of the Business Plan (see charts, following page).

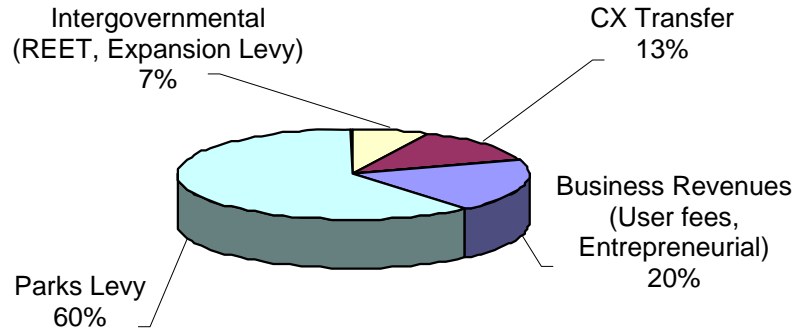
Since 2002, there have been transfers of facilities, mostly pools, which generated more than \$2,000,000 in revenues. The business revenue forecast for the remaining assets has risen from a total of about \$2.3 million in 2002 to more than \$5.1 million in the 2008 adopted budget.

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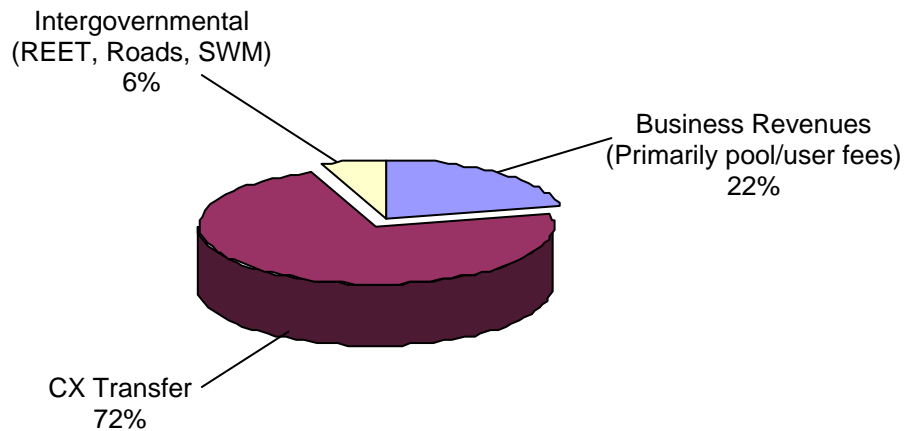
<sup>1</sup> Includes Benson Hill annexation, Greenhouse program, and White Center Heights grant supplementals, as well as revised revenue estimates.

<sup>2</sup> Based on ARMS financial reports.

### 2008 Adopted Revenues - \$26.5M



### 2002 Adopted Revenues - \$26M



## Expenditures – Summary

### Parks and Recreation Division Expenditures

2008 Adopted Expenditures	\$27,446,665
2008 Revised Expenditures <sup>3</sup>	\$27,491,310
2007 Actual Expenditures <sup>4</sup>	\$22,326,279

### Third Quarter 2008 – Actual Expenditures

January 1 – September 30, 2008	\$18,554,411
January 1 – September 30, 2007	\$16,481,684

With three-fourths of the year having passed, expenditures were 68 percent of the Division's annual expenditure budget. This expenditure pattern is in line with historical business trends.

As part of the newly passed levy (2008 – 2013), the Division was tasked with increasing maintenance to historic levels prior to 2002 and will utilize levy funds as voters intended.

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<sup>3</sup> 2008 Revised includes automatic carryover and supplemental requests for the Benson Hill Annexation, Greenhouse Program, and White Center Heights grant.

<sup>4</sup> 2007 Actuals based on 14<sup>th</sup> month ARMS reports.

## Revenues - Implementing the Business Plan

### Key Business Units

#### Marymoor Park



#### Marymoor Business Unit

	2008 thru Q3	2007 thru Q3	Change (\$)	Change (%)
<b>Traditional</b>				
Rev - facilities	\$145,686	\$108,536	\$37,150	34%
Rev - fields	\$545,797	\$550,563	(\$4,766)	-1%
<b>Non-Traditional</b>				
Rev - parking	\$334,662	\$343,207	(\$8,545)	-2%
Rev - concerts*	\$470,251	\$188,087	\$282,164	150%
Rev - concert ticket sales	\$11,608	\$8,078	\$3,530	44%
Rev - Subway	\$17,671	\$17,798	(\$127)	-1%
Rev - Pet Garden	\$2,950	\$4,500	-\$1,550	-34%
Sponsors/concessions	\$46,245	\$38,931	\$7,314	19%
Cirque du Soleil**	\$697,281	\$0	\$697,281	100%
Naming rights	\$115,000	\$115,000	\$0	0%
<b>Revenues - Total (Rounded)</b>	<b>\$2,387,000</b>	<b>\$1,332,000</b>	<b>\$1,055,000</b>	<b>79%</b>
<b>Expenditures (Rounded)***</b>	<b>\$1,714,000</b>	<b>\$1,532,000</b>	<b>\$182,000</b>	<b>12%</b>

\* 2007 concert revenue was previously underreported. The correct amount is reported here.

\*\* Cirque du Soleil did not occur in 2007.

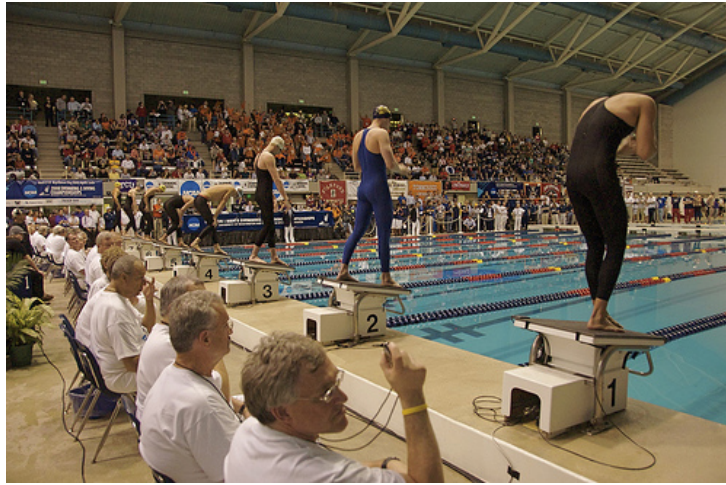
\*\*\* Expenditures include only direct costs and do not include maintenance labor loaned in from other work units ("loan-in labor"). In the year-end (Fourth Quarter) report, annual expenditures will be reported along with annual revenues and compared against the cost-recovery targets established in Ordinance 14509.



### **2008 Third Quarter highlights from Marymoor Park include:**

- ❖ Overall, revenue from Marymoor Park is up significantly from 2007. This can be attributed to the return of Cirque du Soleil (reported on in the Second Quarter Report), a successful summer concert series, and sustained high levels of use of the synthetic turf soccer fields.
- ❖ Revenue from the Concerts at Marymoor outdoor summer concert series was up significantly from 2007. The shows brought in \$470,000, more than double the revenue from 2007. This can be attributed to the increased number of concerts from 12 in 2007 to 21 in 2008, as well as to the collection of a \$5.00 per car parking fee, new in 2008.
- ❖ Revenue from ball fields is down slightly overall from the same period in 2007. This is due to the closure of ball fields #1 and #2. Construction began in July to convert the two fields to multi-use synthetic turf fields and is expected to be completed by the end of December. Revenue from early season use of ball field #1 helped to offset losses from the field closures.
- ❖ At the same time, revenue from the synthetic turf soccer fields continued to increase, up by 10 percent, when compared to the same quarter in 2007.
- ❖ New events, such as Crossfit Challenge at the Recreation and Event Area and Wine Notes in the Concert Venue, contributed to increased facility rental revenues, which were up by 34 percent. Also key to sustaining facility rental revenues are large events that continue to return annually to Marymoor Park. Event organizers include the Seattle 3-Day, American Diabetes Association, Sammamish Kennel Club, Northwest Crafts Alliance, and Lake Washington Velo.
- ❖ Construction of the Marymoor Connector Trail began in July. A critical link in the King County Regional Trails System, this new trail connects the Sammamish River Trail on the park's west border with the East Lake Sammamish Trail on the park's east border. The new trail is scheduled for completion in late November.

## Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center (WKCAC)



### Aquatic Center Business Unit

	2008 thru Q3	2007 thru Q3	Change (\$)	Change (%)
<b>Traditional</b>				
Rev - facilities	\$469,541	\$458,303	\$11,237	2%
Rev - courses	\$135,613	\$106,840	\$28,773	27%
Rev - drop in	\$38,754	\$34,677	\$4,077	12%
Rev - banquet hall	\$36,333	\$32,091	\$4,242	13%
<b>Non-Traditional</b>				
Rev - Subway	\$12,297	\$14,229	(\$1,932)	-14%
Rev - concessions	\$472	\$1,243	(\$771)	-62%
<b>Revenues - Total (Rounded)</b>	<b>\$693,000</b>	<b>\$647,000</b>	<b>\$46,000</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Expenditures (Rounded)*</b>	<b>\$1,489,000</b>	<b>\$1,333,000</b>	<b>\$156,000</b>	<b>12%</b>

\* Expenditures include only direct costs and do not include maintenance labor loaned in from other work units ("loan-in labor"). In the year-end (Fourth Quarter) report, annual expenditures will be reported along with annual revenues and compared against the cost-recovery targets established in Ordinance 14509.

**2008 Third Quarter highlights from Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center (WKCAC) include:**

- ❖ Overall, revenues are up more than 5 percent compared to the same period in 2007. This can be attributed to greater revenue from team rentals, where a 5 percent fee increase was implemented, as well as from public recreation programs, which experienced higher attendance. There was no reduction in scheduled use of the facility, despite the team rental fee increase.
- ❖ The event rental fee also increased; however no increases in revenue have been seen, as the facility has hosted fewer events in 2008.
- ❖ Attendance in public recreation programs is up when compared to 2007, resulting in a significant increase in revenue in this category. Part of the 2008 increase stems from the extended facility closure in the first quarter of 2007, but even when comparing the second and third quarters from 2007 and 2008, overall attendance numbers are higher for 2008.

## King County Fair in Enumclaw



### Fair Business Unit

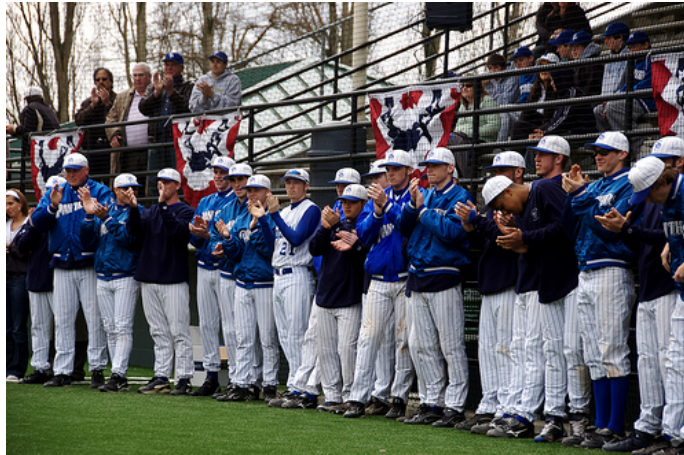
	2008 thru Q3	2007 thru Q3	Change (\$)	Change (%)
<b>Traditional</b>				
Rev - facilities	\$0	\$15,718	(\$15,718)	-100%
Rev - Annual Fair	\$66,088	\$384,092	(\$318,004)	-83%
<b>Revenues - Total (Rounded)</b>	<b>\$66,000</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>	<b>(\$334,000)</b>	<b>-84%</b>
<b>Expenditures (Rounded)*</b>	<b>\$201,000</b>	<b>\$419,000</b>	<b>(\$218,000)</b>	<b>-52%</b>

\* Expenditures include only direct costs and do not include maintenance labor loaned in from other work units ("loan-in labor"). In the year-end (Fourth Quarter) report, annual expenditures will be reported along with annual revenues and compared against the cost-recovery targets established in Ordinance 14509.

### 2008 Third Quarter highlights from the Fair include:

- ❖ The 146th King County Fair was held July 18 - 20, with the theme of *Grow It, Show It, Know It*.
- ❖ The Fair underwent a major makeover this year with a family-oriented event focusing on King County's rich agricultural legacy and the environment. Admissions and parking were free.
- ❖ The primary focus was on exhibits and family-friendly entertainment. There were 720 4-H exhibitors, 155 FFA exhibitors, and 270 Open Class exhibitors who entered everything from cookies to quilts to piglets!

## Recreation, Ballfields, and Facilities



### Fields and Facilities Business Unit

	2008 thru Q3	2007 thru Q3	Change (\$)	Change (%)
<b>Traditional</b>				
Rev – ball fields	\$308,416	\$205,616	\$102,800	50%
Rev - facilities	\$129,211	\$135,611	(\$6,400)	-5%
<b>Non-Traditional</b>				
Rev - RV camping	\$47,348	\$39,454	\$7,894	20%
<b>Revenues - Total (Rounded)</b>	<b>\$485,000</b>	<b>\$381,000</b>	<b>\$104,000</b>	<b>27%</b>

Note: Expenditure information from fields and facilities is tracked annually and will be discussed in the Fourth Quarter Report.

#### 2008 Third Quarter fields and facilities highlights include:

- ❖ Revenues from ball fields increased 50 percent from the third quarter of 2007 to 2008. An increase in youth athletic field fees, the completion of the synthetic turf conversions at Preston Athletic Fields and Community Park and Steve Cox Memorial Park, and the addition of several new user groups are the main reasons for the growth of ball field revenues.
- ❖ Facility rental revenue has a slight decrease over this time last year. A tougher economy, the loss of a long-term rental at the White Center gymnasium and a partial summer closure of Preston Community Center (restoration project) have contributed to this slight decrease. Once the restoration project is complete, more frequent use of Preston Community Center is anticipated.
- ❖ Use of the Tolt-MacDonald Park and Campground remains strong despite half of the RV campground being closed for a flood mitigation project. The park's other camping opportunities, tents and yurts, were consistently reserved throughout the third quarter.



## Swimming Pools



### Swimming Pools Business Unit

Includes: Evergreen, Vashon and Cottage Lake Facilities

	2008 thru Q3	2007 thru Q3	Change (\$)	Change (%)
<b>Traditional</b>				
Rev - Pool Fees	\$318,300	\$483,943	(\$165,643)	-34%
Rev - Concessions	\$191	\$262	(\$71)	-27%
<b>Revenues - Total (Rounded)</b>	<b>\$318,000</b>	<b>\$484,000</b>	<b>(\$166,000)</b>	<b>-34%</b>
<b>Expenditures (Rounded)*</b>	<b>\$741,000</b>	<b>\$910,000</b>	<b>(\$169,000)</b>	<b>-19%</b>

\* Expenditures include only direct costs and do not include maintenance labor loaned in from other work units ("loan-in labor"). In the year-end (Fourth Quarter) report, annual expenditures will be reported along with annual revenues and compared against the cost-recovery targets established in Ordinance 14509.

### 2008 Third Quarter swimming pool highlights include:

- ❖ Overall, revenue in this category is down from 2007, largely due to the transfer of Renton Pool to the Renton School District during the first quarter of 2008. This transfer had an impact on both revenues and expenditures.
- ❖ Vashon Pool launched a new partnership this summer with the Vashon Park District and Vashon Aquatic Club to teach the island's third and fourth graders how to swim. Lessons are offered for free, with the Vashon Park District contributing toward the cost of the program. There were 30 participants this year.
- ❖ Northshore YMCA's summer day camp program again utilized the pool at Cottage Lake, which brought \$5,100 in revenue. Some 1,500 youth came to the pool, and Northshore YMCA reports that Cottage Lake is their most popular day camp site.

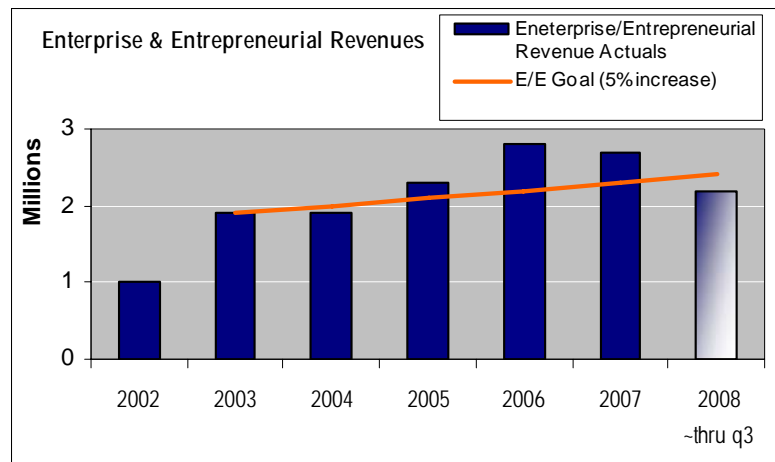
## Implementing Entrepreneurial Strategies New Ways of Raising Revenues



### Entrepreneurial Strategies

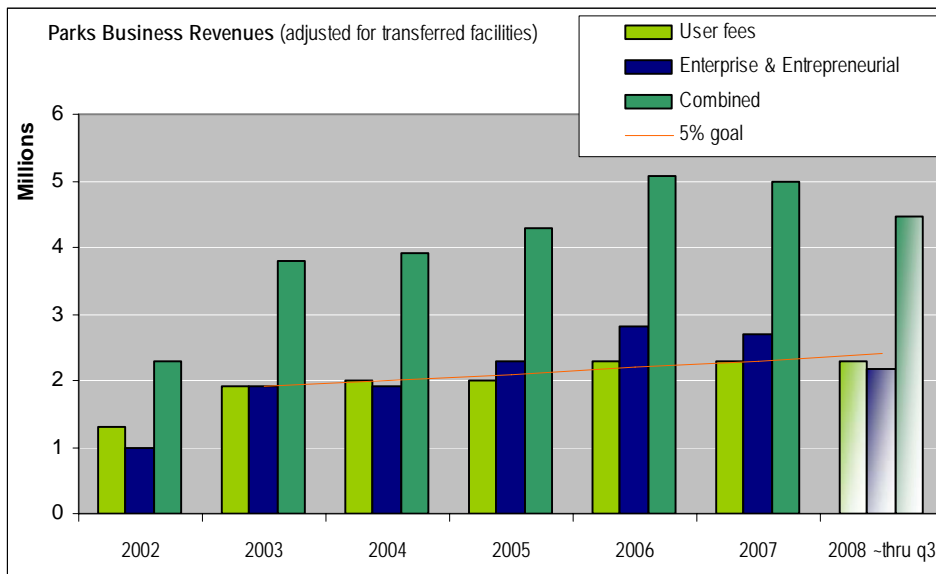
By the third quarter of 2008, overall business revenues were up slightly compared to the same quarter of 2007. The outlook for the balance of the year looks strong, and the Division is on target to achieve its 5 percent annual increase growth goal set forth in the business plan.

Since 2003, the Division has been maximizing business revenues and exploring other actions that reduce the tax subsidy needed for active recreation facilities. The Division will continue to foster and develop corporate, non-profit and community-based partnerships in an effort to increase revenues and leverage Revenue Enhancement and Opportunity Fund capital dollars.



Overall business revenues include enterprise and entrepreneurial revenues and user fee revenues. The Division defines enterprise/entrepreneurial revenues to include a myriad of non-traditional activities, ranging from corporate sponsorships and other creative promotions to special facility rentals (such as the Marymoor concert series, Cirque du Soleil, and yurts). These are generated largely as a result of cultivation efforts and

partnerships established by the Division's staff. User fee revenues represent more traditional recreational activities, such as ball field usage fees, and are generated according to what the market will bear.



Through the *Partnership for Parks* initiative, the Division aggressively pursues mutually beneficial agreements with other entities and generates revenue through the following:

1. Maximizing revenue from existing assets
2. Establishing corporate sponsorships, naming rights, and other contributions
3. Pursuing gifts, bequests, and legacy donations
4. Evaluating revenue-generating opportunities on King County lands to benefit the Division

#### **2008 Third Quarter business highlights include:**

- ❖ Revenue from the Concerts at Marymoor outdoor summer concert series was up significantly from 2007. The shows brought in \$470,000, more than double the revenue from 2007. This can be attributed to the increased number of concerts from 12 in 2007 to 21 in 2008, as well as the collection of a \$5.00 per car parking fee, new in 2008.
- ❖ The Division launched a new partnership with Whole Foods Market called “5% for Parks Day” during the summer of 2008. Two area stores participated in the July day and two for the August day, with each store contributing 5 percent of its daily sales to King County Parks. The total donation came to \$20,070 (to be reported in the Fourth Quarter Report).



- ❖ With a host of new major events, facility rentals at Marymoor Park jumped by 34 percent. Moreover, many large special events return annually to Marymoor, as well, contributing to consistent revenues in this category.
- ❖ Overall, field and facility rentals throughout the Division were up 27 percent over this time last year, which is mainly attributable to user fee increases, newly available synthetic turf fields at Preston Park and Steve Cox Memorial Park, and steady camping rentals at Tolt-MacDonald Park.
- ❖ A direct mail appeal from King County Executive Sims and Councilmember Jane Hague about the launch of the Division's giving program, the King County Parks Legacy Fund, was sent to prospective donors during the second quarter of 2008. More than \$4,000 in pledges and contributions has been received in response to that mailing.

## Pursuing Gifts, Bequests, and Donations



### 2008 Third Quarter gifts and donations highlights include:

#### ❖ Grants awarded:

- In addition to granting the White Center Teen Program's youth participants \$100 for "Night Out Against Crime" activities, the Seattle Neighborhood Group also awarded the members of the White Center Teen Program's youth soccer team, the Aztecs "Southwest Youth of the Year".

#### ❖ Contributions:

- During the second quarter, the Division officially launched the King County Parks Legacy Fund, the Division's giving program directed towards individuals.
  - A direct mail appeal from Executive Sims and Councilmember Hague about the launch was sent to prospective donors during the second quarter of 2008. More than \$4,000 in pledges and contributions has been received in response.
  - Executive Sims and Councilmember Hague were featured in a short video highlighting the King County Parks Legacy Fund. In addition to airing at the Movies@Marymoor, the video is being shown on KCTV.
- The White Center Teen Program's youth soccer team, the Aztecs, received donations from Starfire Sports, including 15 team jerseys and a \$750 team scholarship for fall league play.

## **Agreements with Other Organizations** **Community Partnership and Grants (CPG) Program**

The Community Partnership and Grants (CPG) Program continues to spearhead the development of partnerships that result in new facilities and amenities in King County's parks. There are currently 30 projects in various stages of negotiation, planning, design, permitting, or construction that represent \$10 million in CPG grants and Capital Improvement Program commitments. By leveraging community investments (cash, grants, in-kind, donations, volunteers, etc), CPG projects will eventually add new public recreation facilities valuing an estimated \$60 million.

Progress during the third quarter included:

- Continued work on Audubon Birdloop Trail in Marymoor Park
- Launched a community planning effort for Maury Island Marine Park
- Further discussed new CPG project at Dockton Park
- Held public meetings on the Duthie Hill mountain bike project

As noted in Ordinance 16281, the Division will begin reporting on new issues of interest related to the CPG Program in future reports.

These photos highlight the variety of CPG projects:



## Transferring Parks and Recreation Assets

Transferring local recreation amenities to cities and focusing on rural and regional programs has been a key element of the Parks Business Plan. Consistent with the Parks Business Plan, the transfer of parks and pools within the Urban Growth Area (UGA) is an on-going discussion as part of the broader County annexation strategy.

Progress on transfers during the third quarter of 2008 included:

- Inglewood Wetlands (City of Kenmore): approved by Council – transfer in process
- Mary Olson Farm (portion of North Green River Park) (City of Auburn): approved by Council - transfer in process
- Swamp Creek (City of Kenmore): approved by Council - transfer in process
- Soaring Eagle portion (City of Sammamish): approved by Council - transferred June
- Tollgate Farm (City of North Bend): approved by Council – transfer in process
- West Hill Park (City of Bothell): approved by Council - transferred July

Remaining facilities inside of cities and/or the unincorporated UGA include:

Park	Jurisdiction
132 <sup>nd</sup> Square Park	City of Kirkland
Arbor Lake	TBD
Bingamon Pond	City of Federal Way
Bridle Crest Trail	City of Bellevue
Bryn Mawr	TBD
Camelot	City of Federal Way
Cascade Park	City of Renton
Edith Moulton	City of Kirkland
Evergreen Athletic Fields	TBD
Evergreen Pool	TBD
Five Mile Lake	City of Federal Way
Green Tree	City of Kent
Hamm Creek	TBD

Park	Jurisdiction
Lake Geneva	City of Federal Way
Lakewood Park	TBD
Maplewood Heights	City of Renton
Maplewood Park	City of Renton
May Creek Park	City of Renton
North Green River Park (active portion)	City of Kent
North Meridian	City of Kent
North Shorewood	TBD
Park Orchard	City of Kent
Puget Sound	TBD
Salmon Creek	TBD
Sierra Heights / Honey Dew Park	City of Renton
Skyway	TBD

*Continued on next page*

<b>Park</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>
Hazel Valley	TBD
Hilltop	TBD
Juanita Heights Park	Finn Hill Park and Recreation District or City of Kirkland
Juanita Triangle	Finn Hill Park and Recreation District or City of Kirkland
Kingsgate Park	City of Kirkland
Klahanie Park	Sammamish or Issaquah

<b>Park</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>
South County Ballfields	City of Federal Way
Southern Heights	TBD
Steve Cox Memorial Park	TBD
Sunset Playfield	City of SeaTac
White Center Bog	TBD
White Center Heights	TBD
Windsor Vista Park	City of Kirkland

Transfers of facilities that occurred prior to 2008 have been reported on in previous quarterly reports. See the 2007 Fourth Quarter report for a complete list.



## **Community Outreach and Involvement**



### **Community Involvement and Volunteering**

While the weather gave us a lot to ponder this summer, one important factor remained constant: the continuing enthusiasm and hard work of the volunteers who support our parks, natural areas and trails. During the third quarter of 2008, there were 96 volunteer events that took place throughout King County's system, with 1,869 volunteers providing some 16,300 hours of service. Volunteer efforts included trail repair, habitat restoration, greenhouse work, and park clean-up and improvement projects.

#### **2008 Third Quarter volunteer involvement highlights include:**

- ❖ More than 350 volunteers provided nearly 6,400 hours to help make the King County Fair a success in July. Exhibitors from 4-H, FFA, and the Grange, and the Open Class participants all volunteered before, during, and after the fair. Volunteers from the youth group, VOICE, helped run the children's fun area, and more than 100 youth and adult members of a church group helped create a wildly popular putt-putt golf course made almost entirely with recyclable materials.
- ❖ The Marymoor Recycling/Composting Volunteer Crew helped make the Division's recycling and composting initiative at the Concerts at Marymoor a huge success. More than 210 people volunteered nearly 700 hours throughout the summer concert series, educating concert-goers about how to properly recycle or compost their cups, silverware, and food waste. Due to the volunteers' hard work and dedication, 56 percent of the waste generated at the shows was diverted from the land fill, up 6 percent from the 2007 pilot year.
- ❖ September 12 marked United Way's annual Day of Caring, and King County Parks hosted eight projects, with some 430 volunteers providing 2,400 hours of volunteer labor. Volunteers, who came from employers such as Microsoft, AT&T, and Ernst & Young, helped to build and improve hiking trails and remove invasive weeds.

- ❖ During the third quarter, there were more than 40 volunteer work parties in natural areas and along backcountry trails, including in Cougar Mountain, Grand Ridge, Duthie Hill, Soaring Eagle, Taylor Mountain Forest, Maple Ridge Highlands, Cavanaugh Pond, Big Fin Hill, Log Cabin, and Green River Natural Area. Long-time Division partner Washington Trails Association sponsored many of these events and focused on repairing hiking trails and constructing a trail bridge in Grand Ridge Park. Other work parties involved activities such as removing invasive weeds and laying weed fabric to prevent future infestations. This type of work is key to protecting ecologically-sensitive areas, such as streams and wetlands and encourages a sense of stewardship among King County citizens for their public lands.

### Community Outreach Initiatives

#### [www.parksfeedback.com](http://www.parksfeedback.com)

Launched in December 2005 as a pilot program and expanded to the entire system in the second quarter of 2006, *parksfeedback.com* has proved to be an extremely useful customer feedback tool connecting citizens and user groups with the Division.

Through *parksfeedback.com*, the Division receives a variety of compliments, suggestions, feedback, and notifications, which are delivered directly to the email inboxes of Division staff. While the feedback system does not provide a statistical gauge for constituent satisfaction, it is a powerful tool that asks a series of multiple choice questions and allows users to write in comments and include their email or telephone number to receive a direct response from the Division.

The notifications sent by park users through the *parksfeedback.com* tool also serve as “eyes and ears on the ground” for the Division’s 25,000 acres of property. Communications from park users have helped the Division to identify problem areas in parks and along trails, such as incidents of graffiti and vandalism, and to respond to citizens’ questions and concerns. This has also assisted the Division in prioritizing short, medium and long-term maintenance issues and capital improvement needs. This means that even with a widespread system, the Division has been able to remain connected with citizens and communicate promptly and directly with them.

The following are some excerpts of communications received during the third quarter of 2008 (and where appropriate, how the Division responded):

Feedback about Cougar Mountain: *“I just have to say a big THANK YOU to everyone at the Parks Commission for all you do to make Cougar Mountain park such a GREAT place! We live near-by and are out there 3 to 4 times a week. The trails are all wonderful and exceptionally well maintained. We use the park to trail run, hike, animal watch, play in the stream, see the flowers – and generally just enjoy being together as a family in the woods.”*

Feedback on the King County Fair: An August 6 Letter to the Editor of the *Enumclaw Courier-Herald* newspaper gave “Green Thumbs Up for the King County Fair”.

Feedback on Marymoor Park: *“I drive through Marymoor often and pay my dollar as I drive through on my way out. There is always an old man working in the little booth, I'm not sure what his name is... but sometimes I find myself just wanting to drive through the park just to pay a dollar so I can see him smile. He is honestly the most happy and wonderfully pleasant person to see at the end of my tiring day, and I just wanted to let you know he is a wonderful employee and I give him and you my thanks!”*

Feedback on Cottage Lake Pool: *“My children and I attended a neighbor's birthday party at the Cottage Lake pool. The mother of the party used to be a lifeguard and swim instructor and so our expectations were high. Needless to say we were very impressed with the cleanliness of the pool and the professionalism of the staff. My child didn't pass the swim test and the lifeguard (Sarah) was so sweet and gave her tips on how to improve her swimming. After a few tries, she passed. We love Cottage Lake Pool!”*

Feedback on the King County Parks website: A visitor to the King County Parks website used [parksfeedback.com](http://parksfeedback.com) to alert the Division about a broken link on a web page. Appropriate staff was notified, the link was repaired within hours, and the visitor was notified of the update.

### **Other community outreach initiatives**

- ❖ The Division teamed up with the promoter of the Concerts at Marymoor to offer a special promotion for the July 20 Chieftains concert, where interested concert-goers received free tickets by completing the survey on [parksfeedback.com](http://parksfeedback.com). More than 1,200 comments were registered in the week prior to the show. In addition to learning invaluable information about the public's perspectives about King County's system of parks and trails, the Division was able to raise further awareness about the useful [parksfeedback.com](http://parksfeedback.com) tool.
- ❖ On September 13, several months worth of community visioning for Skyway Park culminated with a “Party in the Park”. More than 120 community members attended the event, which brought together community groups, King County agencies, and local businesses. The event featured a work party in the morning, and sports, music, kids' activities and a free BBQ lunch in the afternoon. Everyone pitched in to help create a beautiful mural that now decorates the restroom building, with the intention of discouraging graffiti. This was a huge success for newly-formed “Friends of Skyway



Park”, which planned the event, and will hopefully translate into long-term community involvement in keeping the park healthy and safe.

- ❖ The Division’s website continues to be an interesting, helpful and relevant tool for the public. Visits to the website peaked in July, with most interest relating to the Concerts at Marymoor. Visitors came to the Division’s website from nearly 3,000 other sources, with the primary sites being the main King County website, Google, concertsatmarymoor.com, and Amtrak Cascade.